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2 July 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report of CIA Records Management Board -  
Discussion with Mr. Bannerman

25X1A 1. [ ] and I met with Mr. Bannerman on 2 July to discuss the Quarterly Report of CIA Records Management Board dated 30 April 1969. Mr. Bannerman structured the discussion around the list of suggestions in paragraph 7 on pages 4 and 5 of the report. The following subparagraphs are numbered to correspond with the numbers of the suggestions:

a(1) Destroy unnecessary records now. As Mr. Bannerman said, this is axiomatic.

25X1A a(2) Shorten scheduled storage periods. In response to the specific question about the progress already made on this point [ ] said that while it was true that we were successfully reducing storage periods the impact of the decisions made was still prospective. He cited as an example the fact that the law requires that security records be kept for thirty years, but until recently the Office of Security had listed its records for retention for one hundred years. They have now agreed to reduce that period to fifty years. This is a real improvement but, as the oldest security records on hand are about twenty years old, it will be ten years before we reach even the legal limit. The records people, during this ten year period, will attempt to convince Security that a further reduction in the retention period should be made. Mr. Bannerman requested a memorandum (which he referred to as a "blind" memo not addressed to anyone but set up as a reminder for him of a problem to be solved) on the subject of unilateral decisions, such as those made by CI Staff, which have the impact of extending periods of storage of records. He pointed out that no unilateral decision on the part of any component would be taken as binding but rather would be treated as a recommendation to be accepted or rejected by the persons in the organization with ultimate responsibility for records. (This request for an "issue" memorandum was the first of a number which will be mentioned in the following paragraphs. A list of memos requested will be appended.)

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a(3) Transfer files to non-Agency jurisdictions. At first Mr. Bannerman thought this meant the storage of Agency files in National Archives facilities but [ ] said that what was referred to here was a relatively limited number of non-Agency records which had been in our possession and which could properly be transferred to the offices of origin. He mentioned certain Army project files as typical of this small group.

a(4) Establish positive disposal dates for all "indefinite deposits". In response to a question [ ] agreed that all current deposits in the Records Center had positive disposal dates and that we were talking here about deposits made prior to 1964. Of particular concern are 30,000 cubic feet on which only review dates have been established. The point was made that a review date did not really give the records people what they needed but provided a situation of considerable comfort to the offices responsible for the records. Mr. Bannerman identified this as another subject on which he wanted a reminder memorandum, a memorandum in which the responsible offices relying upon review dates would be named so that action could be taken to get them to establish positive disposal dates for the material.

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b(1) Establish qualified RMOs to manage component records. Cross reference was made from this suggestion to proposal number 3 on page 6 of the report. Reference was also made to the information which [ ] had put in his separate transmittal memorandum regarding the fact that the records of the Agency were concentrated in several large holdings, the responsibility of certain Directorates or parts of Directorates. The fact that many RMOs were only part time officers even in places where the records holdings were quite large was discussed. Mr. Bannerman requested an issue memo on this problem. [ ] in a subsequent discussion of proposal 3 reminded Mr. Bannerman that the DDS itself had only a part time RMO. I noted that in the transmittal memorandum [ ] had mentioned that some criticism had been leveled at the DDS because its commitment to the Records Program appeared to be limited. Mr. Bannerman professed some surprise at this but indicated that he would take action to assign a Records Management Officer to be responsible for Directorate records problems. Whether this officer will sit on Mr. Bannerman's immediate staff or sit with [ ] staff was not specified. It was agreed that an additional position would have to be made available, however, because there was no position available on [ ] also mentioned the DCI area as the other principle organizational segment for which inadequate RMO service was available. Mr. Bannerman requested another "issue" memorandum to remind him to take up the problem of a DCI area RMO with John Clarke, Director

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of PPB. During the course of this discussion on this point Mr. Bannerman emphasized that he wants to break the records problem into segments discussing archives, emergency records, historical records, etc., as separate issue. At this point the storage of archives at [ ] came up. He mentioned that we had missed an opportunity to use year end funds for the renovation of the [ ] warehouse. In response to [ ] comment about the relative economy of new construction vs renovation, he pointed out the advantage of renovation, which would not need the special authorization which new construction might require. We also discussed the idea that the space at [ ] might be used for the supplementary distribution materials now held in Suitland; Mr. Bannerman agreed that the activity of that file precluded its transfer to [ ]

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b(2) Require screening prior to retiring records to Center. This was another point which Mr. Bannerman referred to as axiomatic.

b(3) Apply office of record concepts to eliminate duplicates. Mr. Bannerman mentioned that this was in the charter of the Records Board. The problem is to get the offices to act in accordance with this concept. While not specifically requesting an "issue" memorandum on this subject Mr. Bannerman referred to it in similar terms and I recommend that we treat it as one of the subjects on which an issue memorandum is required.

b(4) Improve office file systems and procedures. In this context [ ] brought up the prospective use in RI and NPIC of movable shelving to make more efficient use of available storage space.

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b(5) Advocate fewer copies and control records creation. Again, axiomatic. (No discussion, though with hindsight I could wish we had pursued the point.)

b(6) Remove supplemental distribution function from the Center. Mr. Bannerman asked what supplemental distribution was conducted from the Center; wasn't all supplemental distribution handled at Suitland. He was reminded that code word and top secret supplemental distribution was not transferred to Suitland. He wondered aloud how we had ever gotten saddled with the responsibility for the distribution but did not pursue the point. He mused about the possibility of finding the necessary 10,000 square feet of space which would be needed to transfer this function from the Center to Headquarters. The discussion was not conclusive.

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c(1) (Discussion deferred to be included with the discussion of proposal 1, below).

c(2), (3), and (4) (Discussion postponed until discussion of proposal 4, below).

d(1) Request time extension for use of GSA Center at Suitland. Mr. Bannerman agreed that we should do so.

d(2) Retire selective inactive records in Federal Records Centers and the National Archives. Mr. Bannerman requested another "issue" memorandum requesting Office of Security review once again its decision regarding the inappropriateness of storing Agency records in Federal Records Centers.

25X1A d(3) Use Federal underground storage for non-emergency type Agency vital records. [ ] said that we had approximately 2 to 3 thousand cubic feet of vital records which fell into the non-emergency category. Mr. Bannerman included this batch of material with that discussed under d(2) above. Both d(2) and d(3) will be the subject of the memo regarding Office of Security review.

d(4) Renovate space [ ] to store archives. (This has already been discussed under b(1) above).

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d(5) Build addition on Records Center [ ] Colonel White's adamance on the point of construction was alluded to and as the conversation was concluding was once again discussed. Mr. Bannerman may include in his approval of funds for a feasibility study a request for review of the feasibility of new construction at the Records Center.

d(6) Rent space or store in office buildings. (We must have touched on this lightly if at all. I don't remember the discussion.)

2. We then moved on to a discussion of the specific proposals of the report. I have already covered the discussion of the Records Management Officer problem since it related directly to the points made under d(1) above. On the question of purchasing movable shelving for the Records Center Mr. Bannerman indicated that he would authorize the feasibility study and it was apparent that he was in sympathy with the request. The point was made that this would buy us 6 years within which to begin work on other programs which would begin to reduce the total holdings of the Agency not only in the Records Center but in the Headquarters complex as well. A lengthy discussion of the fourth proposal

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on the microfilm program took place. I referred to [ ] memorandum on the Ocean City conference and in particular to its mention of the fact that microform systems were pushed not as means for reducing records bulk but as means of establishing effective control over correspondence and records systems generally. To put it another way we should not microfilm in order to save space but we can expect to save space if we adopt an effective microfilm or microform program. Mr. Bannerman seemed ready to accept this point. He said that the idea of establishing a centralized unit with 22 positions and 12 cameras did not appeal to him. He would rather see the personnel requirements spread among the several records focal points in the organization and would prefer to see the cameras likewise scattered throughout the organization so that the microfilming could be done at the point of origin of the records. He made much of the fact that, as far as he was concerned, the records program was decentralized only to the extent necessary to permit the creators of records to determine what should be retained and what the retention period should be. The program should be centralized when decisions are made regarding what storage systems are to be used. The discussion dwelt for some time on the need for compatibility among the microform systems and particularly the indexes to the microform systems which would be adopted by the organization and again the need for a strong central body was emphasized. Reference was made to earlier discussions of microforms and the stand-down on decisions on microfilming because of the "state of the art". [ ] cited several technical breakthroughs including the elimination of the "measles" problem with microfilm and we concluded that there was no longer any reason to defer decision regarding an Agency microfilm program. The suggestion was made that it would be well to organize a team of experts, not representatives of Directorates but a group which could speak for the Agency. Again an "issue" memo was requested which would discuss the organization and composition of the microform team, the period of time during which they would work on this problem and the product which would be expected of them. Mr. Bannerman indicated that he thought the group should be organized and given a month to analyze the problem and come in with a preliminary report which would among other things identify the scope of the problem as they saw it and the period of time they thought they would need to come up with concrete recommendations for the Agency. The program should be undertaken not to save space but to prepare the organization to meet the increasing paper work problem of the decades ahead and in particular to get records into a form compatible with the computer and computer indexing techniques. The fact that we could save storage space on a ratio of 100 to 1 was a happy by-product of decisions that should be made for systems purposes.

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3. The following is a list of the "issue" memorandums which Mr. Bannerman expects:

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a. Impact of unilateral decisions, such as those of CI Staff, to extend retention periods on the records storage program.

b. Extensive holdings with only "review dates", not retention periods.

c. Concentration of records in certain offices, some with inadequate RMO coverage.

d. Need for a senior RMO for DCI area. Matter to be taken up with John Clarke.

e. Storage of archives

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f. Obtaining Directorate cooperation on "office of record" practices.

g. Office of Security review of decision regarding storage of Agency files in Federal Records Centers.

h. Establishment of an Agency Microform Working Group (MIWOG).

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Chief,  
Regulations Control Staff

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